I CLAIM:

1. A method of creating a trust over a computer network, comprising the steps of:

receiving, over the computer network, an electronic request to create a trust from a grantor, the request including identification information regarding the grantor and a beneficiary of the trust;

receiving, from the grantor over the computer network, authorization to electronically convey funds from the grantor to a trust account;

receiving an electronic confirmation from the grantor over the computer network to establish a trust with the conveyed funds; and

then storing, in a trust account database and associated with the trust account, information regarding the grantor, the beneficiary, and the conveyed funds.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the computer network comprises the Internet; further comprising:

providing an Internet website;

and wherein the request to create a trust, the authorization to electronically convey funds, and the electronic confirmation to establish the trust are effected by the grantor over the Internet website.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

prior to the storing step, operating a computer to analyze the identification information to confirm the grantor's identity.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the request received from the grantor over the computer network further includes a purpose of the trust.

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5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving, from the grantor over the computer network, identification information regarding at least one nominated trustee;

after the storing step, contacting the trustee over the computer network to request confirmation that the trustee accepts trustee responsibilities for the trust;

receiving a response from the trustee, over the computer network, comprising additional identification information regarding the trustee and confirmation that the trustee accepts trustee responsibilities for the trust, operating the computer to analyze the identification information to confirm the trustee's identity; and

then storing, in the trust account database and associated with the trust account, information regarding the trustee.

6. The method of claim 5, further comprising:

after the operating step confirms the trustee's identity, assigning a username and password for the trustee; and

then, in response to receiving the username and password over the computer network as a login request, authorizing the trustee to manage the conveyed funds in the trust account by commands communicated over the computer network.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising:

combining stored information associated with the trust account into a taxing authority form; and

responsive to receiving an authorization from the trustee over the computer network, communicating the taxing authority form over the computer network to a taxing authority.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:

after the combining step, and prior to receiving the authorization from the trustee, communicating the taxing authority form to the trustee, over the computer network, for review.

9. The method of claim 6, further comprising:

providing a website accessible to the trustee in response to receiving the username and password over the computer network as a login request, the website having one or more hyperlinks for selecting a financial institution; and

responsive to the trustee selecting a first one of the hyperlinks, combining at least some of the stored information from the trust account database into an electronic account application, and communicating the electronic account application to a first financial institution corresponding to the first hyperlink.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising:

responsive to receiving an acceptance, from the first financial institution, storing information regarding a first account with the first financial institution in the trust account database; and

then, responsive to receiving a request from the trustee, over the computer network, to transfer funds to the first account, electronically transferring funds to the first account.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising:

responsive to the trustee selecting a second one of the hyperlinks, combining at least some of the stored information from the trust account database into an electronic account application, and communicating the electronic account application to a second financial institution corresponding to the second hyperlink; and

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responsive to receiving an acceptance, from the second financial institution, storing information regarding a second account with the second financial institution in the trust account database; and

then, responsive to receiving a request from the trustee, over the computer network, electronically transferring funds from the first account to the second account.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

responsive to receiving a request from the trustee, over the computer network, to close the first account, communicating a request to the first financial institution to close the first account; and

then electronically carrying out a clearing house transaction to effect a transfer of assets from the first account to the second account.

13. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

storing, in the trust account database and associated with the trust, a record of each transaction regarding the transfer of assets to and from the first and second accounts; and

creating an accounting of the transactions from the stored records.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the electronic request to create the trust from the grantor includes an indication of at least one terminating event;

and further comprising:

responsive to the terminating event occurring, notifying the beneficiary of the terminating event over the computer network; and

then responsive to instructions from the beneficiary, electronically conveying assets from the trust to a beneficiary account.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the instructions from the beneficiary include a selection of one of a plurality of distribution types comprising a cash payout and a distribution in kind;

and further comprising:

5   responsive to the selection indicating a cash payout, electronically transferring funds corresponding to the cash value of assets of the trust to the beneficiary account; and

responsive to the selection indicating a distribution in kind, electronically transferring assets to the beneficiary account.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of receiving an electronic confirmation from the grantor comprises:

receiving a digital signature over the computer network from the grantor; and

5   verifying the digital signature.

17. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

after the storing step, communicating a notice regarding a demand right to the beneficiary over the computer network; and

responsive to receiving a notice over the computer network from the

5   beneficiary indicating an intent to exercise the demand right, transferring funds to a beneficiary account.

18. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

after the storing step, establishing an Internet website associated with the trust having at least one hyperlink by way of which contributions may be made over the computer network;

5   receiving a contribution request from a donor party over the computer network;

receiving, from the donor party over the computer network, authorization to electronically convey funds from the donor party to the trust account.

19. The method of claim 18, further comprising:

after the step of receiving authorization from the donor party, communicating an acknowledgement to the beneficiary over the computer network.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the acknowledgement comprises a hyperlink to electronic greeting cards that may be communicated from the beneficiary to the donor party.

21. The method of claim 18, further comprising:

after the step of receiving authorization from the donor party, communicating a notice regarding a demand right to the beneficiary over the computer network; and

5   responsive to receiving a notice over the computer network from the beneficiary indicating an intent to exercise the demand right, transferring funds to a beneficiary account.

22. The method of claim 18, further comprising:

after the step of receiving authorization from the donor party, searching the trust account database to derive a cumulative amount of gifts from the donor party to the beneficiary within a taxing period;

5   comparing the cumulative amount of gifts to a limit;

responsive to the comparing step determining that the cumulative amount of gifts exceeds the limit, notifying the donor party, over the computer network, of the result of the comparing step;

then, responsive to receiving a confirmation from the donor party

10 authorizing the electronic conveying of funds from the donor party to the trust account,

communicating, over the computer network, an offer of tax return preparation services to the donor party.

23. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving, from the grantor over the computer network, identification information regarding a primary nominated trustee and a successor nominated trustee;

after the storing step, contacting the primary nominated trustee over the

5   computer network to request confirmation that the primary nominated trustee accepts trustee responsibilities for the trust;

receiving a response from the primary nominated trustee, indicating that the primary nominated trustee declines trustee responsibilities for the trust;

then contacting the successor nominated trustee over the computer

10   network to request confirmation that the successor nominated trustee accepts trustee responsibilities for the trust;

receiving a response from the successor nominated trustee, over the computer network, comprising additional identification information regarding the successor nominated trustee and confirmation that the successor nominated trustee

15   accepts trustee responsibilities for the trust, operating the computer to analyze the identification information to confirm the successor nominated trustee's identity; and

then storing, in the trust account database and associated with the trust account, information regarding the successor nominated trustee.

24. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving, from the grantor over the computer network, identification information regarding a primary nominated trustee and a successor nominated trustee;

after the storing step, contacting the primary nominated trustee over the

5   computer network to request confirmation that the primary nominated trustee accepts trustee responsibilities for the trust;

receiving a response from the primary nominated trustee, over the computer network, comprising additional identification information regarding the

primary nominated trustee and confirmation that the primary nominated trustee accepts

10   trustee responsibilities for the trust, operating the computer to analyze the identification

information to confirm the primary nominated trustee's identity;

then storing, in the trust account database and associated with the trust

account, information regarding the primary nominated trustee;

after the operating step confirms the primary nominated trustee's

15   identity, assigning a username and password for the primary nominated trustee;

then, in response to receiving the username and password over the

computer network as a login request, authorizing the primary nominated trustee to

manage the conveyed funds in the trust account by commands communicated over the

computer network;

20   then, in response to receiving, from the primary nominated trustee over

the computer network, notice that the primary nominated trustee is resigning from

trustee responsibilities for the trust, then contacting the successor nominated trustee

over the computer network to request confirmation that the successor nominated trustee

accepts trustee responsibilities for the trust;

25   receiving a response from the successor nominated trustee, over the

computer network, comprising additional identification information regarding the

successor nominated trustee and confirmation that the successor nominated trustee

accepts trustee responsibilities for the trust, operating the computer to analyze the

identification information to confirm the successor nominated trustee's identity; and

30   then storing, in the trust account database and associated with the trust

account, information regarding the successor nominated trustee.

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